

How To Contact Senator Smith:

I always look forward to hearing from Oregonians whether they want to share their thoughts about a particular issue or if they just need help navigating the sometimes daunting federal bureaucracy. Please feel free to contact me by phone, mail, or email, whichever is most convenient for you.

Internet:

web page: <http://gsmith.senate.gov>

Capitol Office:

404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3753

Portland Office:

One World Trade Center
121 SW Salmon Street, Suite 1250
Portland, OR 97204
(503) 326-3386

Eastern Oregon Office:

Jager Building
116 S Main Street, Suite 3
Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 278-1129

Southern Oregon Office:

Security Plaza
1175 E Main, Suite 2D
Medford, OR 97504
(541) 608-9102

Western Oregon Office:

Federal Building
211 E 7th Avenue, Suite 202
Eugene, OR 97401
(541) 465-6750

Central Oregon Office:

Jamison Building
131 NW Hawthorne Avenue,
Suite 208
Bend, OR 97701
(541) 318-1298

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Improving Education for Our Children

Improving the quality of education in Oregon and making it accessible to everyone is one of my top priorities. I believe that parents and local communities have ultimate authority in schools. The federal government can help provide flexibility, funding, and support for their efforts. We have a duty to Oregon's kids to give them the best preparation for life we can.

In recent years, school budgets in Oregon have suffered. I don't want our kids to be shortchanged and I am working to ensure that increased funding from the federal government will help keep our schools strong. Improving schools requires addressing all aspects of education from the earliest years of a child's life through high school and college. I have worked to support initiatives at each of these critical levels. You may be familiar with some of these:

- Head Start provides early childhood development services to children from low income families. I have long supported increased funding for this program and I will be working to improve its administration so that it can continue helping needy kids.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) supports special education and related services that are expensive and very difficult for local communities to provide. I support raising funding for next year to \$4.8 billion, a 75 percent increase since 2001.
- Qualified Tuition Programs, also known as 529 Plans, allow Americans to save money in a tax-deferred account to pay for higher education expenses. Currently, withdrawals from these accounts are tax-free, but unless Congress acts, this tax-free status will expire in 2010. This year, I am working to pass legislation that would make this important benefit permanent.

From Baker to Bandon and from Ashland to Astoria, we need to ensure that every child in Oregon has the opportunity to get a world-class education.

Combating the Meth Crisis

Methamphetamine abuse has become a growing problem all over America, particularly in western states. Meth abuse is now the second most often treated drug addiction among Oregon teens and has destroyed countless lives. The ease with which this drug can be manufactured, using over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, makes it particularly difficult to combat. In the past decade, Methamphetamine use has increased by over 300 percent. It is one of the most deadly and addictive drugs.

This year, I joined a number of my Senate colleagues, including Oregon's Ron Wyden, to introduce the Combat Meth Act (S. 103). The bill provides resources to law enforcement officials to catch and punish Meth producers and dealers, increases public awareness of the problem, and establishes new treatment options.

I am as heartbroken as you are to hear of the terrible tragedies occurring in our own backyard. It is an Oregon epidemic that we cannot allow to continue. The Oregon state legislature has already taken steps to stem the Meth crisis, and I believe that passing the Combat Meth Act will provide our local authorities with the tools they need continue this battle. I hope that with a comprehensive approach we will be able to repair some of the lives and families that have been devastated by this scourge.



*Senator Smith talks with children
at a local school*

The Need for Affordable Prescription Drugs

Everyone has felt the pinch of the rising costs of health care. While the United States enjoys the best health care in the world, we also pay more than people in other countries for many of the same medicines. Too many of our most vulnerable citizens are being forced to make choices between feeding their families and paying for health care. Because of this, more and more Oregonians have been turning to "reimported" drugs. Estimates indicate that two million Americans spend nearly \$700 million each year on reimported drugs, two thirds of which is spent via the internet. I believe that we have become so focused on debating whether importation should be legalized we have lost track of the reality that importation is happening.

We need to face the facts about re-importation, and it is our duty to protect Americans as they try to protect their health. Increased internet and cross-border sales

are inevitable and I will be working with my colleagues to pass a bill that improves safety. While I am convinced of the necessity for legislative action, we also need to preserve incentives for creating life-saving drugs.

I introduced the Safe Importing of Medical Products and Rx Therapies (Safe IMPORT) Act to allow individuals, pharmacies, and wholesalers to safely import prescription drugs from Canada and as many as 15 European countries. If enacted, this bill will immediately allow individuals to personally bring home pharmaceuticals from Canada. Within one year, pharmacies and wholesalers could import drugs and internet pharmacies would receive the same access shortly thereafter. Eventually, the legislation could allow imports from most European countries, and will help ease the burden of paying for vital prescription drugs for all Americans.

Ending Hunger in America

The United States is the wealthiest nation in the world, yet there are still too many Americans suffering from hunger. The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show that 36 million people, including 13 million children, live in households that struggle to feed their families. In 2004, the USDA reported that Oregon was ranked 8th in hunger prevalence.

It is critical to bring awareness to national and international hunger issues. I have been working with senators from both parties to seek solutions to this problem. I also believe that we need to collaborate with local governments and non-profits if we are to be successful.

Most recently, I worked with my colleagues to introduce the Hunger Free Communities Act. This bill strengthens local efforts to fight domestic hunger and the federal government's ability to assess hunger prevalence. The Act urges Congress to cut U.S. hunger in half by 2010 and end hunger in America by 2015. It includes provisions supporting national nutrition programs and authorizes \$50 million for community-based grants that focus on meeting local hunger needs.

Hunger is an issue that cannot be ignored. We must provide for the thousands of Oregonians, especially children, who wonder where they

will get their next meal. Lawmakers and experts working together to address this pressing problem can help ensure that no one is left out of the abundance our nation has to offer.



*Senator Smith Promotes Hunger Awareness
at a Community Kitchen*



U.S. SENATOR

GORDON SMITH



gsmith.senate.gov

FALL 2005

Dear Friends:

This year, Congress has debated many vital issues that will affect our nation for decades to come. At the same time, America has experienced the worst natural disaster in our history. The physical devastation of Hurricane Katrina will take years to overcome, and the human toll will live on long after. I am committed, as all Oregonians are, to helping the people of the Gulf Coast wherever we can.

Even before the hurricane hit, household budgets were being threatened by high energy costs. Skyrocketing gas prices following Katrina have made it even more difficult for families trying to make ends meet. In addition, America continues to face many challenges, from combating the Meth epidemic to fighting the war on terror.

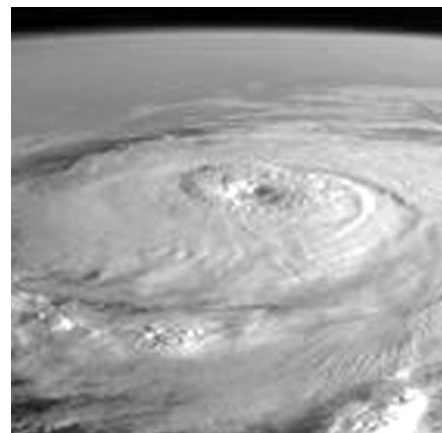
We have also had major successes this year. After years of work, Congress passed a national energy policy bill. We opened up markets in Central America for our farmers and businesses. And we passed a major transportation bill that will provide funding for highway and other projects critical to Oregonians.

We have many challenges before us. But if we work together, in a bipartisan fashion, I believe we will meet these challenges head-on and provide Oregonians with more opportunities and an improved quality of life. As always, please feel free to contact me with your questions, concerns, and suggestions.

Warm regards,

Recovering from Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans forever, and the tragedy has touched the hearts of all of us. Just as we did after September 11th, 2001, Oregonians have lent their time and resources to those struggling to rebuild their lives. I am proud of our citizens' willingness to help as the people of the Gulf Coast continue to experience difficult times.



Congress has pledged billions of dollars in aid to the Gulf Coast states and several Oregon-based relief organizations are assisting in the disaster recovery efforts. I am pursuing legislation that will help rebuild the region's economy, and I have also been pushing Congress to protect funding for Medicaid and other safety-net programs that are needed now more than ever.

In addition to the human catastrophe, Hurricane Katrina seriously affected the nation's oil supply and sent gas prices soaring. Unfortunately, there are reports that some unscrupulous businesses are seeking to profit from the crisis. In response, I recently pressed the Federal Trade Commission to investigate accusations of gas price gouging in Oregon. I have also called for congressional hearings into the matter. And as chairman of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Trade, Tourism, and Economic Development, I plan to convene my panel to hold hearings on price gouging.

If there is any unethical activity, we need to move swiftly to punish the wrongdoers. It is unfortunate that this action may be necessary, but I am committed to protecting Oregon families from unfair energy costs.